A NOTE ON COLOR SYMBOLISM IN GG

An article entitled "A Note on the Green Light" in the fall, 1961 issue of the FN points out a parallel between the green light in GG and the green light image in Coleridge's poem "Ode on Dejection." Though the connection between the dock light and the green breast of the new world is an easily recognized use of color symbolism, it is less obvious that other types of color symbolism are used consistently throughout the novel. Gold, the color of the sun, for example, is identified with Gatsby and his "splendid dream." The "gold hat" is used to describe the hero in the epigraph of the novel. Gatsby's yellow automobile has a "labyrinth of windshields . . . that mirrored a dozen suns" (77).* In Gatsby's romantic dream, Daisy is a "golden girl" (144), and in the scene in which he shows Daisy his collection of shirts, Daisy is so impressed by the splendid quality of his naiveté that she says she would like to put him in the "pink and golden billow of foamy clouds" (114) which they see from the window, and wheel him around. Yellow, or gold, is also associated with the eyeglasses of Dr. Eckleburg, which suggest scrutiny from a higher world. The color is used later in a scene in Myrtle's city apartment, where, the windows glowing with yellow sunlight, the narrator becomes aware of a feeling of being watched.

Daisy is identified with two colors, blue and white. Complementing her maiden name, Fay, blue is used to carry out the idea of an illusory or twilight fairy world. Daisy's own car is a blue coupe, and when she comes to see Gatsby at Nick Carraway's cottage, his gardens appear blue. She wears a lavender hat and approaches the house "under dripping bare lilac trees."

"A damp streak of hair lay like a dash of blue paint across her cheek and her hand was wet with the glistening drops" (103). The symbolism involving the color white is even more important in the scheme of the novel. When Nick appears at the Buchanan home in the opening of the novel, Daisy is wearing a white dress that is stirred by the breeze which blows in through the windows, and this, together with other imagery, suggests a cloud-like setting and the idea of a goddess. Later Jordan Baker describes to Nick the appearance of Daisy when Gatsby fell in love with her: "She was just eighteen, two years older than me, and by far the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville. She dressed in white, and had a little white roadster" (90). In the beginning, Nick speaks of the "white palaces of fashionable East Egg" (6-7), and later he speaks of Gatsby's dream of a girl "high in a white palace, the King's daughter" (144).

The pure, wondrous quality associated with whiteness is conveyed in an image which occurs in the scene describing Gatsby's falling in love with Daisy. It is said that he had "gulped down the incomparable milk of wonder" (134). Again, from the Queensboro Bridge, New York looks like a white city. "Rising up across the river in white heaps and sugar lumps all built with a wish out of non-olfactory money, the city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its wild promise of all the mystery and beauty in the world" (82). This passage is crucial in the scheme of the color symbolism because the white city made with a wish from "non-olfactory money" turns out to be an illusion, and by a similar double-edged effect white is later identified with Daisy's wedding gown (her betrayal of Gatsby's dream), and with the diamonds given to her by Tom Buchanan. The white dress Daisy wears in two important places in the novel becomes the wedding gown in the scene where the defeat of Gatsby is re-enacted in the hotel Plaza suite, and both the white dress and the white gems that flash coldly appear later in Nick's surrealistic dream of the East.

In the scene where Gatsby and Nick call on the Buchanans, several color symbols are used at once. Gatsby's hopes are at their highest, though they will soon be destroyed. From the Buchanan garden, the Sound is brilliantly green, and is marked by a white sail. "Slowly the white wings of the boat moved against the blue cool limit of the sky. Ahead lay the scalloped ocean and the abounding blessed isles" (141).

—Robert E. Long, Syracuse University

THE FILM TITN

On 12 March at Washington State University, the film adaptation of TITN was analysed by panelists Bruce Anawalt (English), George Dickie (Philosophy), and Robert Littlewood (Anthropology).

The panelists agreed that the film adaptation was unsuccessful. Major criticisms follow: the Cinemascope scenery distracted from the action; in the characterization, Jennifer Jones was too old for Nicole, Rosemary should have initially remained 18 since Dick's attraction to a "Daddy's Girl" is of thematic importance, and sterile Baby should have been kept a spinster; changing Dumphry to a woman further illustrates the arbitrariness of the adaptation; and the characters at times act out of character as in Tommy's speech restraining Nicole from stopping Dick's leaving—"Nicole, don't take advantage—again." Furthermore, the formulas repeated by Dr. Dohmler to explain the behavior of Dick and Nicole—"tyranny of the weak" and "transference and cross-transference"—were obtrusive and oversimplified. Indeed, the central portion of the film critically fails to provide an adequate explanation for Dick's swift degeneration. Although the novel is none too clear on this point (aside from the obvious demoralizing influence of Nicole's money), there Dick's character defect is foreshadowed by his always surrounding himself by the weak.

—Bernard Knieger, Washington State University

HOFFMAN'S GG STUDY

Scribners has given Fitzgerald better treatment than most authors obtain from "casebooks." Under Frederick J. Hoffman's editorship, *The Great Gatsby: a study* is an intelligent, evocative addition to F scholarship, providing materials for fresh approaches to F. Hoffman's introduction views GG in the light of modern scholarship, concentrating on the novel's form. The study has four sections. The first indicates the artistic background and development of F's style; "Winter Dreams" and essays by Wilson and Rosenfeld accompany excerpts from Mencken, Conrad, Ford. Part two describes the social setting, while three examines the novel's structure; F's introduction to the Modern Library edition is reprinted.

The fourth section collects major essays on GG by Wescott, Troy, Trilling, Fussell, Bewley, Hanzo, and Chase. Two new essays make the book particularly interesting. Gale Carrithers, Jr. in "Fitzgerald's Triumph" shows how approaches mentioned by Hoffman can be combined for classroom presentation. Henry Dan Piper's "The Untrimmed Christmas Tree" brilliantly discusses the religious and personal values behind the novel; using letters from Scribners' files and the Princeton Library, the pencil first draft of the novel, and "Absolution," Piper persuasively argues that Nick's ideals are those of Catholicism with the religious dogma removed. The essay is in keeping with the originality and discernment of the book.

—Eric Solomon, The Ohio State University

ITALIAN CRITICISM OF FITZGERALD

Books

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[Perosa, Sergio. See checklist.]

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Berti, Luigi. "Un Giovane Americano non Inferiore a Hemingway," *La Fiera Letteraria* (15 March 1953), 4.

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Cimatti, Pietro. "Romanzieri Americani," *La Fiera Letteraria* (15 May 1960), 5.

Weaver, William. "F. Scott Fitzgerald," *Lo Spettatore Italiano* (July 1951), 190-192.

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Il Grande Gatsby (1951)

La Fiera Letteratura (6 May 1951), 4. (Augusto Guido)

Letterature e Arte Contemporanae, II (Jan.-April 1951), 99-103. (Augusto Guido)

Letterature Moderne, III (Jan.-Feb. 1952), 103-105. (Luigi Maria Guadagnino)

—Jackson R. Bryer, University of Wisconsin

TSOP PLAY

The adaptation of TSOP is still running at the Sheridan Sq. Playhouse, and we have seen it now. The play is charming and witty; the production

is tasteful and unpretentious; Paul Roebling is splendid as Amory Blaine; and you are urged to see it.

Sydney Sloane's adaptation retains the episodic structure of the book, and although every attempt is made to preserve the mood and atmosphere of F's work, the production is not cute or corny.

After the play we interviewed Sydney Sloane—who also plays Rosalind —and her husband, Jess Osuna, who is co-producer and plays Monsignor Darcy. Miss Sloane explained that the project began as a drama-school assignment to dramatize a scene from a novel, and then grew into a play. There was a string of disappointments before the play was produced; every potential backer had ideas about revising the script. The biggest break was encouragement by Mrs. Lanahan, who liked a try-out performance.

TURNBULL'S SUCCESS

Andrew Turnbull's SCOTT FITZGERALD is now in its third printing and at FN press time was seventh on the NY TIMES best-seller list. The reviews were very favorable (see Checklist)—even the reviewers who slammed F had kind words for Mr. Turnbull. The immediate lesson to be drawn is that the F revival has ceased to be a revival; interest in F is now a prevailing fact of American literature.

F MSS IN THE LILLY LIBRARY

1. Printer's copy for VEG, incomplete. Carbon copy with the epigraph in F's hand.
2. ALS. Juan-les-Pins, 21 March 1926. 1 p. Note authorizing undesignated person to pick up a package at the post office.
3. Holograph note instructing editor to change the name Boroski to Lladislau in TITN. 1 p.
4. ALS. Baltimore, n.d. 1 p. To Perkins; refers to Hemingway.
5. Material for appendix of LT. Nine holograph pages and nine typescript pages revised—none in F's hand.
6. Gordon Bryant photo of Zelda F with holograph note on cover from F to Perkins.
7. Two pen-and-ink drawings of Anson Hunter of "The Rich Boy" by "M.F."

BRIEFS

Scribners plans two F publications in August—a re-issue of TSOP in the Scribner Library and a collection of the Pat Hobby stories edited by

Arnold Gingrich. The Hobby item is very good news, and the hope here is that its reception will encourage Scribners to publish other uncollected F stories. . .Howard S. Mott's Catalogue 179 [1962] offers "an apparently unrecorded variant of the First Edition" of F&P. This is the sheets of the Scribners first printing in the binding of Whitcombe & Tombs, an Australasian outfit. Since Australia and New Zealand were excluded from the British rights of Collins, Mr. Mott suggests that this copy represents "a tentative step toward Australian or New Zealand publication." Price $95. . .Dr. Charles E. Shain, author of the University of Minnesota Pamphlet on F, has been named president of Connecticut College. . .Harold E. Graves, manager of the Scribner Book Store Rare Book Dept., reports that the note in FN #16 on Sinclair Lewis' copy of GG, which was catalogued at $10 in 1936-37, prompted "ten hopeful souls" to order the item. Just in case there are any doubts, the book was sold years ago; we were trying to make a point about the rise of the F market. . .A public service ad in *Newsweek* (9 April) urging people to visit their libraries includes this claim: "I am a time machine to whisk you into the exciting days of Dostoevski, Cervantes, Dumas and F. Scott Fitzgerald.". . .Don Manning has noted a parallel to Keats' "The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass" (CU, p. 303) in F's "The limousine crawled crackling down the pebbled drive" (CU, p. 106). . .Burke Wilkinson's review of Turnbull mentions that a recent article in FIGARO LITTERAIRE gives a "Gallic version" of F's death, "which the writer chose to describe as a near-suicide in a hovel on the outskirts of Hollywood.". . .Dorothy Kilgallen reports that the Brooklyn Albee promoted the TITN flick with "Heiress after Freudian kicks–ties knot with psychiatrist!". . .The film version of TITN died at the box office, but the perverse opinion persists with us that it deserved better.

SCHOOL GG

Dramatic evidence of F's thorough respectability is an edition of GG for high-school students. The once-disreputable chronicler of jazz-age excesses and frivolities has fulfilled his 1920 ambition of writing "for the youth of his own generation, the critics of the next, and the schoolmasters of ever afterward"–though it is impossible not to wonder where the first P. T. A. scream will come from. This edition is unbowdlerized.

Albert K. Ridout of the Pelham, NY, high school has supplied a foreword, an appendix on "F's Life & Times," and a "Study Guide" (vocabulary exercises, explanatory notes, questions). This material is quite thorough, but a little too gee-whiz-kids-isn't-literature-interesting.

QUOTE

Raymond Chandler to Charles W. Morton, 2 May 1949: ". . . I've always enjoyed reading Marquand and have always felt while doing so that he came as close to being an artist as any writer could who wasn't one. But somehow his successful, oh-so-successful souffles always make me think of little lost books like *Gatsby* and *Miss Lonelyhearts*—books which are not perfect, evasive of the problem often, side-stepping scenes which should have been written (and which Marquand would have written at twice the necessary length) but somehow passing along, crystallized, complete, and as such things go nowadays eternal, a little pure art—great art or not I wouldn't know, but there is such a strange difference between the real stuff and a whole shelf full of Pulhams and Forsytes and Charlie Grays."

—RAYMOND CHANDLER SPEAKING

QUERIES

Does any reader know anything about a newspaper serialization of TSOP? There is a rumor that the novel appeared in this form after it was published, but no copies are known to the editor.

Does any reader own a 1934 TITN with the information on the copyright page that it is the third printing? According to Scribners' records, there were 3 printings in 1934, but the only forms the editor has seen are with and without the *A*.

For the Author of "Babylon Revisited"

Bright words balloon on rods of steel.
They melt like honey on the tongue,
Skim down the spine in shocks of blue tinsel;
And then the shaft into the ribs.

One sequined slipper, hidden in the snow,
Glitters in the blaze of tragedy.

—Esta Seaton, Spelman College

CHECKLIST

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Anon. "His Own Hero," NEWSWEEK, LXIX (12 March), 105-6. Review of Turnbull.

Anon. Review of Turnbull, NYER, XXXVIII (24 March), 178.

Anon. "Wide, Wide World of Books," NATIONAL OBSERVER (18 March), 19. Review of Turnbull.

Brooks, J. "His Enchantment, His Tragedy, His Art," NY HERALD-TRIBUNE BOOKS (11 March), 4. Review of Turnbull.

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Colum, P. & Cabell, M. F. BETWEEN FRIENDS, LETTERS OF JAMES BRANCH CABELL & OTHERS. NY: Harcourt. Includes reminiscence of F by Van Vechten and letters by F and Zelda F.

Culligan, G. "Jazz Age Laureate in New Perspective," WASH POST (11 March), E6. Review of Turnbull.

Fadiman, C. "Reading I've Liked," HOLIDAY, XXI (March), 16-17. Review of Turnbull.

F. GG. NY: Scribners, 1961. "School Edition" with foreword and study notes by A. K. Ridout.

Gardiner, D. & Walker, K. S., eds. RAYMOND CHANDLER SPEAKING (Boston: Houghton Mifflin), 83.

Gilliat, P. "A Whale of a Week in the Cinema," LONDON OBSERVER (11 Feb.), 28. Review of TITN flick.

Gray, J. "Troubadour of the Flapper," SAT REV, XLV (10 March), 19. Review of Turnbull.

Hoffman, F. J., ed. GG: A STUDY. NY: Scribners. With "Introduction" by Hoffman.

Irwin, W. R. "Dos Passos and F as Reviewers of the Am. Social Scene," NEUEREN SPRACHEN (Sept. 1960).

Oliver, E. "Paradise Regained," NYER, XXXVIII (3 March), 93-4. Review of TSOP play.

Perosa, S. L'ARTE DI F. Rome: Edizioni Di Storia E Letteratura, 1961 (Biblioteca Di Studi Americani 7). A full-length critical study.

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Rice, C. F. "New Look at F," MILWAUKEE SENTINEL (25 March), 10. Review of Turnbull.

Ridout, A. K. See under F.

SHOWBILL. Program for Sydney Sloane's adaptation of TSOP.

Robbins, J. A. "F & the Simple, Inarticulate Farmer," MFS, VII (Winter 1961-2), 365-369. Prints long and interesting F letter on Thomas Boyd.

Wilkinson, B. "After the Jazz-Age, The Crack-Up," NYTBR (11 March), 1, 16. Review of Turnbull.

Inquiries and material should be addressed to:
Matthew J. Bruccoli, 113 E Lane Ave., Columbus, Ohio

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*Page references are to the first printing, NY: Scribners, 1925.